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ONE WOMAN'S  
WORK FOR  
FARM WOMEN

*BY JENNIE HUBBELL*









# ONE WOMAN'S WORK FOR FARM WOMEN

*The Story of Mary A. Mayo's Part  
in Rural Social Movements*

By JENNIE BUELL



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**DEDICATED TO  
FARM WOMEN  
EVERYWHERE**





## FOREWORD

THIS land of ours is marvelously rich in mine, in water power, in forest, in soil; but her greatest asset is her people. Agriculture is America's largest single industry; but greater than agriculture is the farmer. One-third of our toilers are farmers; one-half of our people live under rural conditions. The farm home is the root, therefore, of great things for America; it has been the nursery of great men and noble women. Its sanctity, its joy, its whole welfare, in fact, constitute one of our fundamental problems.

Mrs. Mayo not only realized this fact, but she had the power of reaching the hearts of those who dwell in the farm home. She knew their trials, their discouragements, their hopes and ambitions, their struggles to educate their children, their attempts to beautify and adorn. She renewed within them their ideals, and she told them how to realize their dreams.

The story of her life is worth writing

and worth reading, both because of what she did and for what she was. This little book, written by one who knew her intimately and who sympathized with her every ideal and effort, should be read in every farm home in America. Indeed, it should be read by all who love the simplicity of rural life, or who delight in high service unselfishly rendered. Mrs. Mayo's work needs doing in every state. Few have her native gifts for this particular service, but her pattern is good and beautiful.

I was one of "her boys" and one of the first to call her "Mother Mayo." I owe much to her, more than she knew, and perhaps more than I realize. I rejoice that her character and her toil are to be set forth in so winsome a way.

KENYON L. BUTTERFIELD.

President  
Massachusetts Agricultural College  
Amherst, Mass.

**ONE WOMAN'S WORK FOR  
FARM WOMEN**

*I love everybody so much. I have wanted  
to help people to be kinder, truer, sweeter.  
And there is so much to do!*

MARY A. MAYO.



## ONE WOMAN'S WORK FOR FARM WOMEN

"THE little brown woman from the farm," she once called herself. When she was gone, I suppose that more than a score of men and women in the thick of life's fight still treasured certain little notes, written in her fine, neat hand, which were signed "Mother Mayo." They treasured them, not because she had made for herself a name widely known, or had helped others, but because she had meant so much to them individually. She had believed in them personally, and made them feel that she did. Once, as she passed a pioneer's cabin, from her car window she caught a glimpse of a face, the face of a young girl, whom she afterward met and remembered. That girl, grown to womanhood, cherished the memory of the impression she had made on the sympathetic heart of this woman, whose own life was already rich in friendships. A young mother—not one, but many—looked upon her cluster of chil-

dren and pondered, "Because of *her* I am a better mother." A man who had cleared and tilled a farm in the north country, and in the face of poverty had sought to rear and cultivate his family, said: "She was my friend. I never had another like her."

A small regiment of wayward girls, whose lives she had touched, called her "blessed," each saying, "She was *my* friend." Another, one of "her boys," whose life problems had all been spread before her and counseled over—a man now standing among the strong and successful on a main thoroughfare—laid this tribute beside her hushed form, "I loved to call her 'Mother Mayo,' for she seemed like a second mother to me."

Because she affected men and women in like manner, collectively as well as singly, she was able to exert a lasting influence upon certain wide movements of people, of farm people most of all. In some instances she initiated those movements, or "mothered" them to such a degree that their getting rooted in permanency is couple inseparably with her name. To tell something of these movements and of this particular woman, this story has been written

It is the story of a Michigan woman, but she might have lived in New England, or Oregon, or Texas, and the work she accomplished would have been much the same. "All root problems," says President Roosevelt, "are alike." This our farm friend clearly understood. Because she knew the experiences and needs from having lived them all—child, teacher, wife, mother, and neighbor in an inland rural community—she felt that she held the key to every one's life situated as hers was. Through the sympathy engendered by such knowledge she dared discover men and women to themselves. Having found for herself a better way than to follow in the common, rutted roads of farm folks, she was able to help others and put them into contact with something vital outside of themselves.

### *Early Life*

Mary Anne Bryant was born on a farm in Marshall township, seven miles from the city of Battle Creek, Michigan, May 25, 1845. Her mother was from England, her father from New England—both stanch and sturdy stock. In her sight, and indeed



in that of many less prejudiced people, her mother was an almost perfect embodiment of noble, well-balanced womanhood. "My mother never scolded"—this was the daughter's simple testimony; and it was to this mother that, in later years as in youth, she was wont to go for recuperation and fresh faith in humanity, when she came back home after a hard, wearisome journey out among the people she sought to help. This mother was the refuge and counselor of all her life, outliving her by two years. Her father's death occurred several years earlier, and was to this fond daughter such a great stretching of the ties that bound her to him that again and again she cried out in the silence for him. But at last the mystery of the unseen became to her a necessary and beautiful part of her present life.

Little Mary was tutored, while very young, in a private school taught by two maiden aunts from New England. Who knows whether here were not inculcated those niceties of manner and behavior that were always among her noticeable characteristics? Later, she attended the Battle

Creek high school, graduated, and was teaching a district school at seventeen. A business man, who was a schoolmate with her, tells how, when Mary Bryant recited or read an essay in school, all the pupils stopped to listen, for "she was always sure to have something interesting to say."

Thus she came to young womanhood in the vortex of the nation's greatest struggle for existence. She saw her lover go out from the peace of their Northern country neighborhood into the clash and conflict of three fearsome years—saw him go out, too, with her love only half confessed; but on his return—that lover boy grown into the soldier man—she yielded her heart unreservedly and, on the night of Lincoln's assassination, April 14, 1865, put her life into the keeping of Perry Mayo. No wonder, then, that these two were always filled with patriotism and zeal, and that they measured deeds, ideas, and people by broad gauges and large bounds. Though she was then untraveled, she had already participated in her country's deepest experiences. Because of this it was impossible that her horizon should ever be bounded

by the walls of the modest log house in which she and her husband began their homemaking. Their hearts and interests were broadened to those of humanity at large, and were quick to respond to every pulse beat of the neighborhood life. The little log house across the road from Mrs. Mayo's childhood home still stands in a field adjacent to the grounds of the larger frame house that was built after a few years, when crops had yielded well and times had become prosperous.

### *The Mother Heart*

Mrs. Mayo's heart was the true "mother heart," and would have been so had she never borne children herself. The one boy and one girl who came into the home as its very own did not absorb the overflow of her maternal instincts. One and another of her relatives, when no more than babies, were taken within the charmed circle of her home nest, and nurtured till their own homes could receive and care for them again.

Thus the young woman's hands were kept full, and her powers of execution and

endurance developed by the experience of motherhood while she was performing her own household duties. Nor were these duties slight, for these two ambitious young people had to earn everything for themselves with their own hands. But Mrs. Mayo was not one to shirk any task because it stood on the far side of the line custom had decreed was the boundary of "woman's work." If her young husband needed a "lift" at the barn, or even in the field, she was ready to do her best. She loved the out-of-doors, and, along with her indoor cares, always took pride in her poultry, her dairy, and her garden. No labor was menial to her. She did not know "drudgery," for very intimate in her mind was the connection between the deed and those for whom it was wrought. Even during those last bitter months of her life, when pain had tortured her strong body to the uttermost, she persisted in keeping a few of the "chores" at the barn for her own. They were her only "rest," she said, taking her out in the air away from the precious daughter's bedside of pain, a place that racked the courage of both to its utmost

limit. Here, daily, during a few minutes' respite from her self-appointed nursing, she drew strength for her return to it. "I pray as I milk—is it wrong, do you think?" pathetically ran one of her last notes, which she penciled in the watches of the night. Nothing could show the temper of this woman more surely than this admission that, even when too weary and wasted to do more than force herself to keep about, she still combined these "breathingspells" with some labor of the hands, in order to lighten the tasks of others.

*Bread, then Books*

In those first years after the war, American agriculture, with every other industry, was struggling to its feet. Among country people, in general, it was a question, first of all, of land and roof and bread to eat. In these conditions, as we have seen, Mr. and Mrs. Mayo were planted. But they struck deeper root than mere annuals which live only from season to season. Though they valued well enough the comforts of a good home and freedom from debt, they sought, also, a margin for travel and cul-

ture. A sense of this deeper purpose in their lives came through a common enough circumstance. Mrs. Mayo told me about it long afterward, on the first Sabbath evening I spent with the family in their pleasant sitting room, surrounded by homely comforts and choice reading matter. It was a tragic tale, though in such humble garb you would not recognize it as anything heroic until you got your bearings. It was the old yet ever new story of rebellion against the tyranny of brawn, and the decision to invest brains with leadership.

"One day, in a store," she told me, "I met an old classmate, who remarked that she presumed, as I had married a farmer, about all I had to do, or did do, was to work hard and make lots of good butter. While riding home with Mr. Mayo, I kept thinking it over. I knew that I did work hard and that I made good butter, but it made me indignant to think that this was the measure of my life, and that of every farmer's wife. We both decided we would do something, but what we did not know. We took out our old school books and together we studied during that winter; there was

nothing else to do. We had heard of the Grange as an organization for farmers and their wives, but did not know anything about it. When there was one organized in our neighborhood, Mr. Mayo and I joined it. It did not strike me well at first, and I do not think it did Mr. Mayo. It was all for buying direct from the manufacturers. There was little that was educational about it, being scarcely more than a round of routine business. The lecturer's office, as maker of programs for the meetings, was nearly ignored. Indeed, there was nothing really helpful in the first Grange to which we belonged. However, Battle Creek Grange was taking advanced work, and how I enjoyed it!"

This was the beginning. How little either of these two realized that this step of taking out their old school books meant the initiation of a new epoch in their histories, one that was to push them out of the stagnant pools of farm isolation and set them in the currents of the world's work and friendships. Today it all came back to me, what this had meant to them, when a young farmer's wife, with her four-year-old

son on her lap, said to me, "Charles and I are daring each other to get out our geometries this winter to see if we have forgotten all we ever knew!" In such a resolution as that, if carried out, lies folded the conquest of the brutal and fierce within one, and the installing within the home of that which shall drive out of it drudgery and loneliness and low aim, not only for the parents, but in large measure for the children and others who come within its influence. Such people and such homes have ever been the bulwarks of agriculture and the pioneers of a cultured rural life. Thousands of country homes are the scenes of just such triumph of mind over matter. Every such subjugation has connected with it a story of broadening paths and pleasanter places. This is the story of but one of them.

*Outside the Home, but Close By*

Mrs. Mayo's study at home soon led her to reach out into the neighborhood to gather the young people into a reading club. Here, by bringing these young minds into contact with genuine literature, she wrought a beautiful work, for she knew how to bring the



best of it to the humblest listener. She was meanwhile conducting a corresponding work, on the spiritual plane, in the country Sabbath school, where for years she taught the young people's class. She herself was always young of heart, and gay as a girl when occasion warranted; but there was no frivolity in her gayety. Beneath it all there was always a consciousness of the under-currents in the lives that touched hers, even for a brief time. "I believe," she said once, when speaking of later work among friends of an hour or a few days, "I believe every soul is waiting and fairly longing to have us speak to it of its eternal interests. If we only knew how to say the right word!"

After the study of old text-books, she took up for her own culture the work of the Chautauqua Reading Circle, and completed the four years' home study course. Because she aimed to turn whatever she had to account for others, she felt impelled to constantly feed her own mind by daily reading and study, no matter how hard-pressed the hours were with much bodily serving. This habit she continued, ranging widely over the fields of literature and public

affairs. Mr. Mayo's instincts led him into politics and public offices, and his wife kept in close sympathy with him, possessing a ready knowledge of the subjects he was most interested in, as well as of those along her own favorite lines of reading.

### *A New Era*

It was in these days that the Grange movement was inaugurated among farmers throughout the land. Because it meant so much for these two and was, withal, so significant to the farming class, I must tell briefly what it was and how it came about.

During the fearful exhaustion of resources and depression of spirits brought about by the Civil War, no class of people suffered more than those in farm homes. Many of them were heavily in debt, and in thousands of cases the life of the head of the family had been given to save the Union. They led lonely lives, these country people, solitude often breeding in them the narrowness, jealousies, and discontent that thrive most rankly in social separateness. In the South there was still more ground

inoculated with these deadening tendencies. Many of the farms there had been actual battlefields. The laborers had been freed from obligation to serve their former masters, and the owners, unaccustomed to manual toil, were in straits of mind and purse. These were the conditions as one Mr. O. H. Kelley found them when he was sent into the South by President Johnson to investigate and report upon the situation of Southern farmers. Mr. Kelley went from plantation to plantation and into homes, mingling with their families. He became most of all impressed with the ban of social ostracism that rested upon the family of the American farmer because of his calling and necessary environment. He came back to Washington, made his report, and returned to his place as a clerk in the employ of the government. This did not, however, free his mind from the conviction that there was needed some great cohesive force to bring the agricultural people together and make them to know one another. Their needs were akin; their successes and failures were along the same lines; they had hopes, ambitions, and disappointments iden-

tical with other people; but, in the necessary separateness of their living, they were largely unconscious of these facts. Especially did they need to know that their experiences were common to those of their own vocation. They needed to know that others had troubles with calves and chickens and children; that others built hopes on crops of hay and harvested bins of grain; that others carried scars of frustrated ambitions and dreamed of better schooling for their boys and girls than they themselves had had. The direct result of seeing these needs was that Mr. Kelley united six other men and one woman (his niece, Miss Carrie Hall) with him in an endeavor to institute some plan by which this largest class of our people might in some measure be unified. Though constituting, at that time, more than one-half the population of the country, individual families were little more than scattered units, making, as a whole, only a granular structure. They were the prey of whatever combined against them in the business and political world. Worst of all, they were the victims of their own inclinations to social, mental, and moral inactivity.

*Real Help Organized*

The undertaking promoted by Mr. Kelley, and designated as "The Grange," or "Order of Patrons of Husbandry," was launched in 1867, but made no appreciable growth until in the early seventies. Its aim was to bring farmers to see that their happiness depended upon prosperity, which in turn rested upon knowledge, and that the ultimate object of this organization was to bind them together in a unity of endeavor to secure this knowledge. This was the substance of a very brief preamble to the constitution as originally sent out. A few years later, in 1874, a "Declaration of Purposes" was published, which has remained the guiding star for the high-minded, if somewhat conservative, course of this farmers' society—the only movement of the kind that for forty years has kept intact a chain of organizations connecting the individual, through its subordinate, county, and state Granges, with a national body.

For a considerable number of years in the history of the Grange, as it is yet in some instances, the feature of commercial co-operation for financial betterment was

emphasized; but we find in the "Declaration" that the first specific object set forth is, "To develop a better and higher manhood and womanhood among ourselves." Even the second object named is not "merchandise or much gain"; instead, it is, "To enhance the comforts and attractions of our homes, and strengthen our attachments to our pursuits." Then follow in order other reasons for the founding of such an institution among farmers, as stated in the following words:

"To foster mutual understanding and coöperation. To maintain inviolate our laws, and to emulate each other in labor, to hasten the good time coming. To reduce our expenses, both individual and corporate. To buy less and produce more, in order to make our farms sustaining. To diversify our crops, and crop no more than we can cultivate. To condense the weight of our exports, selling less in the bushel and more on hoof and in fleece; less in lint and more in warp and wool. To systematize our work, and calculate intelligently on probabilities. To discountenance the credit system, the mortgage system, the fashion system, and every other system tending to prodigality and bankruptcy."

To actualize these objects in the homes and lives of its members, semi-monthly meetings were instituted, a ritual was prepared calling for thirteen officers to execute it, and nominal fees and dues were levied, with regular reports and dues to the higher Granges in the chain. In the initial call to organize occurred the following words, which have proven prophetic:

"Unity of action cannot be acquired without discipline, and discipline cannot be enforced without significant organization; hence, we have a ceremony of initiation which binds us in mutual fraternity as with a band of iron; but, although its influence is so powerful, its application is as gentle as that of the silken thread that binds a wreath of flowers."

Adhering to these principles, the Grange grew more and more educational in its scope, although casting off none of its practicality. At the same time it shed, like so many excrescences, those whose love of money alone had induced them to join.

### *Woman's Place in the New Order*

It seems, at this distance, quite a matter of course happening that women should

have been made equal with men in the Grange. But forty years ago, when this occurred, it was not so. •Even, indeed, at present, there are few fraternal orders composed of both sexes on the same broad footing as exists in the Grange. But that it should have been wrought into the very beginnings of a society whose aim was to amalgamate the rural population was unmistakably a guidance of divine Providence. In no other way could the problems undertaken have been solved.

The social stratum of a people underlies all its superstructure. If the public were astonished forty years ago to see farmers fairly crowd by thousands into an organization of their own, how they would have rubbed their Rip Van Winkle eyes could they have looked forward and seen what that movement meant to those farmers' wives and their daughters! The founders of the Grange recognized that all life needs its complementary halves—the strength and wisdom of the masculine qualities, and the gentleness and love of the feminine—else results must be crude and opinions biased. For this reason, women were called. With-



out them the Grange could not reach its highest idea, an enlarged country home.

Think what it must have meant forty years ago to country women to come close together once a week or fortnight and spend a social evening with their husbands and brothers! How lonely it had all been before! Days and days they had been shut in with only their own thoughts, seldom seeing faces besides those of their own families.<sup>1</sup> Is it any wonder that their minds grew inert, that they stopped, dazed, before the social complexities of the world beyond their own dooryards? Timid, shrinking, all empty of conceit, not guessing the abilities latent within them, they came to the Grange. There they drank eagerly, deeply. New wheels of thought began to revolve in their brains as they worked. So it was that the weary, worn women of the farm found sustenance in their own province. Neighbors suddenly became more attract-

<sup>1</sup> But the day of need of organization among farming folk is not past. Only last December (1907) there appeared at one of our state Granges a woman who, with her husband, had come five hundred miles to represent the new Grange of which six of her family were members. In conversation with her newly found Grange sisters, this interesting woman said she was the mother of fourteen children, and that, at one time, for five years she saw no one outside her immediate family.

ive to them; they now met as friends those whose names they had barely known; music from many voices stirred their souls as never before; books and papers held out welcoming hands that they had fancied were only for the leisurely. They did the best they could with it all. They listened and thought upon what they heard and felt; they set splendid tables at the frequent feasts. This much they could do.

It is not easily told—the whole significance of all this. Women everywhere, in or out of the order—the farmer's wife and those who know not the smell of clover and the low of cows—all are affected by the fact that women for forty years have been in training in the Grange. So do we rise and fall together. When the Grange had been organized half as long as it has been now, Mrs. Hearty Hunt Woodman, a woman who stood with her husband officially close to the heart of all this work, said of this way opening before farmwomen: "There never was nor can be again such an awakening among the wives and daughters of farmers as our organization has brought about. It surpasses anything I have ever

known. No local society or sectarian gathering can bring together the talent, combined with general knowledge and physical strength, that our women possess, always ready to respond in the Grange to any call that may be made; but outside the gate they are diffident and only listeners. The time is soon coming when their light will shine beyond, and all will feel and know that our organization has developed the mind of woman more than the most sanguine dared to hope. The founders of our order are jubilant every year we meet in annual sessions, because of the work woman is doing."

*Outside the Home, but Farther Away*

Into such initial efforts at rural social improvement work, Mr. and Mrs. Mayo threw the force of their lives at their prime. They were active in their home neighborhood organizations, the Farmers' Club and local Grange, and became officers in the county Grange. They were early sent as delegates to the state Grange session. In 1882, a woman who met them there for the first time, in noting salient features of the meeting, wrote of them, "Mr. and Mrs.

Mayo are young, active, and full of Grange vim."

Mrs. Mayo's work in the state session and her contributions to the state Grange paper were the open doors through which calls came into her home from the outside world. She began to go out into all parts of her own state and adjoining ones to press upon her fellow farm men and women their need of organized effort for their own social and mental awakening. The first time she ventured out of her own county was to talk to Grange people in the adjoining one of Barry. Mr. Mayo accompanied her, and they drove thirty-six miles to their first appointment. Of this meeting, years afterward, she said: "I knew that people came just out of curiosity to hear a woman speak. I saw just a few women who drank in eagerly what little I had to say. Some ridiculed, a few were indignant. That some were glad to listen is evidenced by the fact that they asked me to speak to the school children the next day, which I did. Those women who did listen to me were among my staunchest friends, and are to this day. One woman told me she could not set her-

self at work the next day, but went out to the field where her husband was at work to talk over with him what I had said." In reporting her year's work to state Grange the following December, Mrs. Mayo said of this tour, "If we should ever become so demoralized as to run out of home, friends, and everything else, we certainly shall go to Barry County, for I know of no place where they are so forbearing and charitable as there."

From this time forward more calls than she could fill came to her. They came from all parts of the state. It must be remembered that she was not a free agent whose time was entirely open to outside demands. She was wife, mother, and housekeeper; and nothing but her craving to sweeten and deepen other lives like her own could have tempted her to make room for this work. She left the love circle about her home fire-side in order to beat a path through a way for the most part untrodden by feet of other women of that time. Of the difficulties that beset her path, and of the reception the people gave her work, she once said, in reporting fifty lectures and several talks given

during the year 1885: "As I look back over the work I see so many discrepancies and shortcomings I feel almost guilty; still I have done what I could. I had planned for much work during last winter, but the weather was a ban to the lecture field, and I found my own physical strength insufficient to battle with blocked roads and a thermometer that would persist in staying twenty degrees below zero. The better half of the firm said very decidedly, 'You had better bide a wee,' so that only twice from January until the 23d of March did I attempt any work."

And again, 1886, when reporting seventy-three lectures, she said: "At times we have had unavoidable things to contend against, such as bad roads, rough weather, late trains, weariness, and homesickness; but from the patrons there have always been kindly greetings, words of encouragement, and good cheer; and, best of all, over our many failures and shortcomings they have kindly and gently placed the mantle of that sweet charity which suffereth long and is kind. I have organized but one new Grange this year, Clearwater, of Kalkaska

County. There are some things in this life that I may forget, but I shall never forget the effort we made in behalf of the people of Kalkaska. After carefully comparing their situation before the Grange came to them with their possibilities and even their probabilities now they have a Grange, I think it is the best day's and night's work I ever did in my life."

I have visited this Clearwater Grange, set away among the Kalkaska hills, and felt the lingering influence of its organizer hanging over it after many years. Upon request, the family who entertained her and assisted in the working up of the Grange have furnished me with the following account of her work in that community, which is fairly typical of her tirelessness whenever she was in the field:

"Mrs. Mayo came to our home on August 30, 1886, and in the evening delivered an address at our Boardman Valley Grange. Next day we went with her to J. A. Gibson's farm in Clearwater township, about ten miles from our home. Here in the afternoon she spoke to a large audience in Mr. Gibson's new barn, enrolling

afterward twenty-three names as charter members of Clearwater Grange. In the evening, at a schoolhouse two miles away, she instructed the first and only Grange she ever organized. About midnight we started for home; but, going up a large hill, an evener broke, and we stopped at Mr. Gibson's until we could make a new one. It was four o'clock in the morning when we reached home, for we had no stone county roads then, only the deep sand ones everywhere. During that night a hard frost fell, killing nearly everything. Three years later, Mrs. Mayo came again to our home and spoke at Excelsior Grange, six miles away, in the evening. The following day she went to Clearwater, ten miles, where she dedicated the new hall of the Grange which she had organized. Rain fell most of the day. Leaving the neighborhood about seven o'clock in the evening, on our way to Kalkaska, we were out in one of the most drenching showers of the season. We left her at Kalkaska to take the eleven o'clock train for her home, more than two hundred miles distant."



*Character and Intimacy of Her Work*

No other woman has begun to be the apostle of social, mental, and spiritual development among the rural communities of her native state that this "little brown woman from the farm" has been. This epithet is one she applied to herself, referring to her deep brown eyes and hair, dark skin and sun-tanned hands. So unobtrusive in dress and bearing was she that people seldom guessed her identity until it was made known to them. She blended into the scenes among which she moved much as do the diminutive brown song sparrows of our country roadsides. Like them, too, she attracted attention first when she lifted her voice in joyful, courageous greeting, for she spoke always with tone and face that seemed charged with an individual knowledge of her listeners' difficulties and a sure confidence in their ultimate solution. Her message went ever quick and decisive from her heart to the great, all-hungering heart of humanity in whatever guise it heard her.

It is not enough to say she went through the highways and byways, nor will the num-

ber of public platforms she spoke from give any adequate estimate of what she did. Hers was a far more intimate work. Her most lasting labors were the ones performed by the hearthside, in the living room, sitting often hand in hand with the wife and mother; and even "under the covers" exchanging confidences with the daughters, with whom it frequently fell to her lot to share her room in the crowded homes that made her welcome. Since her earthly pilgrimages ceased, on the walls of how many guest chambers, or in the sitting rooms of how many homes where she had been entertained, have we who follow after found her picture framed and hung!

Mary A. Mayo was only one of hundreds of far-seeing men and women who, realizing actual conditions in the set-apart farm home, grasped the possibilities afforded them through organized movements. To her, however, more than to any other woman, certainly more than to any other Michigan woman, was given the task and privilege of large sacrifice that she might lead others into these richer fields.

*Farm and Rural Opportunities*

She looked out on what was being done for city and town women through social and study clubs. She saw, also, the white hands of philanthropy leading these same city sisters out of self-centered lives to work for others. Over against these things, she saw the Grange and kindred organizations offering corresponding opportunities to farm women. She realized what a woman, years later, expressed in one of the women's meetings that grew up under Mrs. Mayo's nurture, "About the only difference between town and country women, after all, is just a matter of a few miles." With this vision clearly before her, she strove as best she could to make it apparent to the sight of other women situated like herself.

One day she had a memorable meeting with the one woman who, more than all others at that time in her part of the world, could sympathize, encourage, and advise her in these things. This woman was Mrs. Lucinda Hinsdale Stone, widely known as "Mother of Women's Clubs." A year or two before her death, Mrs. Mayo described this interview: "A good many years ago,

nearly twenty I think, when I first began lecture work in the Grange, State Master Luce planned for me a series of meetings in Wexford County. I was new to the work, and it seemed so far that I was homesick ere I started, and my heart almost failed me in the going. I left home on an early train, changing cars at Kalamazoo for the Grand Rapids and Indiana Road, which would take me direct to Manton, my first place of speaking. At Kalamazoo Mrs. Stone came on the train. I knew her by sight, but had never met her personally. How I wanted to talk with her! How I wished to ask her questions which were burning themselves into my heart, and which were demanding answers that I could not give! How I longed to tell her the purpose of my journey, and to ask her counsel as to the best way of reaching my sisters on the farm! After some deliberations with self, I pocketed a little false sentiment and introduced myself to Mrs. Stone. I found her one of the most gracious and affable of women.

"I told her of my mission, my work, and what I hoped to accomplish. She had

heard of the Grange, but knew very little of its object. She asked a great many questions about it, its origin, its founders, and what we expected to accomplish by it. As she belonged to a city club, I told her the Grange was to the country woman what the club was to the city woman, and more; that in the Grange woman stood on an equal footing with man. Here she stopped me and said, 'This is the key to your success.' I read to her our Declaration of Purposes, and she became enthusiastic. She said: 'I have long had you country women on my heart. I have long felt you needed something to lift you to higher thought and greater usefulness, and here you have it.'

"I shall never forget the earnestness of her face nor the graciousness of her manner when we came to the parting of our ways. As she laid her hand on mine, she said: 'Go on with this work, my dear; set its standard high; keep everything out of your organization that is small and trivial; have system, though, and a definiteness of action, always striving for high mental and moral growth. So shall you farm women grow—grow into womanliness, helpfulness, and

strength; so shall you become wise counselors as wives, stronger, better mothers, hence better citizens. I believe the time will come, if you Grange workers are wise, when every township will have some kind of an organization, and you women will stand as man's equal in all things.' At Manton we parted, she following me to the car steps, cheering, encouraging, and strengthening me for the work. Her one thought was to make the Grange worth while, to bring such subjects for study and discussion to its members as should stimulate mental and moral growth.

"Her words have been most prophetic. I never saw her but once after that, but there was no mistaking her ideas of the Grange and its possibilities. She knew its need, and, knowing something of its principles, she saw in the distance what concert of wise work would accomplish."

### *The Evolved Neighborhood*

That was at least a quarter of a century ago. By what tokens shall organized movements among farm people now be known? We cannot well be content with

tracing its influence in great legislative enactments—such as the installing of a Secretary of Agriculture in the Presidential Cabinet, bringing about rural mail delivery, securing stringent dairy and food laws, limiting royalties on patents, creating the Interstate Commerce Commission, and alleviating burdens of unequal taxation in many states. In all these and many less spectacular movements, the Grange, with other farmers' organizations, has had its part. Important as that part has been, there has gone on simultaneously a quiet and interior transformation that is far more important. It has been nothing less than the remaking of the farm home life. This has been done by giving a new outlook on the sphere of rural home influence. In short, by enlarging that home's circumference, it has changed the neighborhood into the larger family. Here, in the genial atmosphere of this larger family circle, men and women have brought forth gifts long wrapped in napkins of social disuse and mental inertia. It was a crude process, to be sure. The foundations built upon had, perforce, to be actual conditions.

*The Evolved Individual*

Only those who knew those conditions could build up out of them, and there had to be radical beginnings. Thus, early in her connection with this work, we find Mrs. Mayo calling her first talk by the title of "Bread and Books." In the inimitably simple and practical way she had of talking to people, singly or in masses, she urged them to work first for shelter, clothing, and food; but then not to be content, but to add to these reading, thinking, and culture of mind and heart. "We are conscious of one thing that must be done," she said, "and that over and over again. We must educate, educate, educate! We have much to educate—some things to educate out and some to educate in. The almighty dollar must be educated out. Men and women must be educated to the fact that money, with the accumulation thereof, is not the whole purpose and aim of life; that the mind is of more importance than bank stocks, bonds, and mortgages; and that the neglect to cultivate the intellect, and the eternal round of toil and care that so many



follow, only tend to drag men and women down to slavery."

She saw, moreover, that the socially ostracized must somehow be helped to express themselves. Lack of ability outwardly to declare his inner self is one of the heaviest penalties imposed upon one by the solitudes and distances of the average rural community. It is not alone want of power to say what he thinks; he suffers quite as much from inability to act what he feels. The plight of multitudes of capable, substantial men and women is voiced by one of them who once confessed to his fellow-farmers, "I have plenty of ideas up in my head; trouble is, I can't get them down into my tongue!"

To farm women the mental and social emancipation of the past half century has been a boon indeed. Not long ago, in the course of some Grange visits in the upper peninsula of Michigan, I spent the day with a woman who had been freed by it. The house—her home—was a two-roomed log house with a "lean-to" kitchen. It was set quite back from the road, but flowers grew about the front, and a vine ran across

one window. The floors were bare, and the seats were all hard, wood-bottomed, straight-backed "kitchen chairs." One of these chairs had rockers, and that was the only attempt at comfort the house afforded; no soft, cushioned rockers or pillowed couches in the corners or under the windows. This woman—in this house—was the mother of nine children. When we had had dinner and the table was cleared away, I took out some writing. The mother gently drove out of the house a flock of five little girls, all nearly of the same size, telling them I must be left alone. But after a few moments of quiet she herself came into the room, and said, "Excuse me for interrupting you, but there is one question I want to ask." Hurriedly my mind flew over the multitude of questions she might wish to ask—this mother of nine children, living thirty-seven miles from a railroad, a furniture store, or a dry goods counter, out of reach of concerts, lectures, and other events commonly thought to be sources of human inspiration. What could be the *one* question she would choose to ask? Would it be how to make a new gown for herself or one

of the girlies? Would it be what sort of a rug to get for her floor, what flowers for her garden, or what pictures for her walls? It was none of these. It was, "How can we help those women where we were yesterday?" The day before we had met in a neighborhood where the women said they had no time to go to Grange meetings. "They say they cannot leave their children," she continued, "and that is just the situation I found myself in when the Grange was formed here; but my husband said he thought we could manage it, and so I have gone regularly, and I have grown to feel that I can find something to talk about with every one I meet. I have good friends all over the neighborhood. I love the country and am never lonely here; the sky and the fields are a delight to me; the odors of the flowers and the clover, the birds, the clouds, and the quiet are all company in our lives. I should so like to help other women to find these pleasures, too."

This was in a pioneer section of the country. Alongside of this let me put the testimony of another woman from a thickly settled, old part of our state. The local

Grange, of which Mrs. McN. and her husband are members, met with them on Mrs. McN.'s fifty-sixth birthday. These two are among the most faithful attendants. Mr. McN., Scotchman that he is, loves an argument, and has practiced public speaking from boyhood. The Grange has furnished him a fruitful field for his "besetting sin," and he rarely allows a meeting to pass without entering the lists. His wife is the mother of ten children, but she is youthful still, despite her generous maternity. On this particular occasion, when the Grange met at her home, the responses to the roll call of members and friends consisted of birthday sentiments. When the large number present had expressed their kindest appreciation of her past and good wishes for her future, Mrs. McN. rose and said: "Once I did not even think of seeing such a day as this. I thank you for the good things you have said and wished for me. I have come to know you, or nearly all of you, through the Grange. All my early married life I spent close at home, busy with my children, cooking for them, clothing them, and doing the best I could for them. I did not miss

the outside things then, for I was satisfied with my duty; but as my children began to grow up, I felt I was a stranger to my neighbors. I told my husband how I felt, and he said we had better join the Grange. In the first one we became members of, matters did not mend much for me. I went regularly enough, but somehow I did not get acquainted. After we joined this Grange, I read somewhere that the way to be happy is to find some one lonelier than yourself and try to make him or her happy. I resolved to try this rule at Grange. When I saw another woman sitting off by herself, I went up to her and told her I was glad she had come; and I took pains to greet strangers when they came to visit us. I kept doing this till I felt perfectly at home among our Grange members and, in fact, wherever I went, for I found friends wherever I tried to be friendly.

"But I didn't know I had done anything for the Grange," she went on, "till one day the master of the Grange announced that we were to entertain the county Grange, and he wished that every one would copy me in the way that I always greeted stran-

gers and made them feel at home. Then I saw, for the first time, that perhaps I had helped somewhere, and I was, oh! so glad that I could do something outside my home!"

In the hush that followed this confidential opening of the gentle woman's heart, one of the men present—sturdy, keen, businesslike upon ordinary occasions—arose and quietly asked, "Isn't that all of life—to make some one else happy?" It has been the revealing of such pure, limpid depths of human nature as these in the lives of men and women, born and bred in country homes, that has made the Grange most worth while, and has put us forever under debt to its promoters.

### *Children's Day in the Grange*

The age of entrance to Grange membership was originally sixteen years. This left the children unprovided for, a large factor in the farm home life. To the country children Mrs. Mayo's mother instinct ever reached out, and early in her association with state Grange she proposed that a day be observed annually as Children's Day.

- The idea met with ready favor with those in authority, with mothers, and especially with the little folks, who were usually left at home or tucked away asleep during Grange meetings. The matter was taken into national Grange by State Master C. G. Luce, and for several years a day was appointed by the master of that body, all the states being asked to observe it. Custom has now decreed that, if possible, the third Saturday in June shall be given over to making happy times for all the children of Grange communities.

Mrs. Mayo was the life of every meeting of this kind that she attended. Having early acquired the habit of telling stories to her own children, she continued the practice wherever she went, often mingling in them her brightest humor and deepest thought. Her bear and Indian stories were especially famous among the children who knew her best. She used the commonest words and most expressive phrases, but spurned all coarseness.

### *Woman's Work in the Grange*

Although men and women entered and worked together in the Grange organiza-

tion, still for a time there seemed to be so many things that women could do better than men, that special committees of women were appointed for these purposes. These were known throughout the order as "Woman's Work Committees." In her own state, Mrs. Mayo was the first chairman, and remained leader of this committee for fourteen years. At the outset she wrote of it: "We thought woman had already borne her part by the side of her brother; but here, as in other fields, there seemed to be work that none but a woman could do. It appealed to her deftness of touch, her artistic taste, and to all the finer sensibilities that characterize the true woman."

The aim of these committees included efforts to improve the rural schools, to inculcate patriotism in the young, to make places where Granges meet more homelike by raising money to furnish them comfortably and attractively, to encourage greater tidiness upon farm premises and improve home dooryards, and to look after the sick, the lonely, and the needy of the various Grange communities.



*Grange Fresh Air Work*

But Mrs. Mayo soon conceived the idea of broadening the scope of the work undertaken by country people so as to enlist their sympathies and coöperation in caring for the worn-out and worthy poor outside their immediate neighborhoods. It was a social extension service she pleaded for, and it grew under her inspiration and direction until it became known as the "Grange Fresh Air Work." It was no easy thing to bring about—this getting strange little waifs and exhausted women and girls from the city out into the peaceful, uninvaded precincts of the comfortable, roomy, better-to-do class of country homes. There is a sort of aristocracy of silence and cleanliness about some of these farmers' homes that it is hard to gain permission to break with the clatter and carelessness of a child unbridled for a holiday. Mrs. Mayo had in mind, it is easy to suppose, quite as much the benefit such an innovation would bring her country friends as the health and joy the change would give the "fresh airs" themselves. She herself set the example, and every summer saw one to half a dozen

worn office clerks, sewing girls, tired mothers, or urchins from the alleys, each given a few days or weeks of delightful outing in her home. A paragraph in one of her midsummer notes reads: "We have now our fifth fresh-air girl, a daughter who five years ago laid her mother's worn-out body away and then stepped into her place, caring for and working for a family of seven. She says it is the first time she has known rest since her mother left them. Her gratitude is just pitiful."

She planned with charity authorities and railroad officials for the proper collection and transportation of hundreds of these denizens of the hot cities. Then she encouraged and coaxed the country women, here and there wherever she knew of one at all favorable to her cause, to enter this beneficent work with her. How well she succeeded is shown by the fact that between a thousand and fifteen hundred poor children and mothers had summer outings, and at least thirty orphans are known to have been adopted into good homes as a direct result of this work.

*Women at the Agricultural College*

Coördinate with these efforts, endeavors in other directions were being put forth toward the same end, namely, the broadening of the scope of the rural home and the usefulness of its members. Thirty-nine years elapsed between the founding of the first agricultural college for boys and adequate provision for girls at the same institution. True, younger colleges of its kind had opened wide their doors earlier, and thus furthered the propriety, possibility, and desirableness of the idea; but it was not accomplished without an often tiresome struggle. There had to be a long, long process of educating the very people for whom the door was to be held open. Hard as it was to persuade farmers to send their boys to a college devoted to a special training in agriculture, it was still more difficult to secure means to provide for the care of these boys' sisters on the same campus. A few people had to do a deal of persuading and educating, both of officials and of the masses, before courses in domestic science and art were given at Michigan Agricultural College. Among these few, it is not

surprising to find Mrs. Mayo. She held that the best things were none too good for the farm wife and daughter. With a boy of her own taking the full agricultural course, and a girl coming on after him—for the one she coveted what the other had. For other girls she desired the same, and she urged upon their fathers and mothers the value of systematic, scientific training for the minds, hands, and eyes of these girls who were probably to become homemakers. This was her plea, in season and out, wherever she went; and year after year she saw that a resolution was adopted by state Grange, thus securing the influence of that body for the movement. At last the plan succeeded. Extra instructors were provided and an old hall fitted up for the girls. In 1900 a special women's building was completed. Many gathered from every direction to celebrate the occasion. The little mother woman who had wrought and prayed for this day for so many years could not be present because of the serious illness of her "one ewe lamb"; but five hundred women arose in her honor, recognizing her labor of love in helping to bring about that day.

Into every structure of stone and brick there goes brain and heart fiber; it is a realization of somebody's dream. None more so than into the beams and walls of the buildings designed for the education of our farm girls.

### *Industrial Home for Girls*

Mrs. Mayo's interest did not stop with the improving and providing education for the cherished daughters of the best farm homes of the land. She knew no narrow prejudices of caste or class. In the city nearest her home she associated herself with charity organizations, and for ten years acted on the board of managers of one of its hospitals. Then, when Cyrus G. Luce went from his farm and the master's chair of the state Grange to become governor of Michigan, he appointed Mrs. Mayo upon the board of control of the State Industrial Home for Girls. In this position she found ample room for the exercise of those gifts of mind and heart that were hers in so generous a measure. She pledged her best for those girls, unfortunate by birth or environment, or both, perverted by waywardness

and often degraded by actual sins. The woman who was superintendent of the school at the time Mrs. Mayo entered upon her connection with it said of her: "She visited and encouraged the officers in their peculiar and often discouraging work. Her interest in the girls and her hope for their redemption never wavered. Unlike many, she had no foolish sentimentalism, but her strong, motherly heart, her sympathetic nature and, above all, her rare common sense, were understood and appreciated by every girl who knew her. Her talks in chapel and cottage were always enjoyed by these girls. They knew and understood her to be a true friend, for no class of girls is keener and sharper in reading character than that at the Home. I always felt safe about any girl that Mrs. Mayo placed in a home, and she took out scores of them. Her vigilant watch-care was constant; if she found the girl was not adapted to the home, or, as it so often occurred, the home was not all it should be for the girl's best good, she would place her in another, sometimes making several changes before the girl was fitted in where the best that was in her could be brought

out. She amazed me by her patience, her sympathy, and her rare discernment in many of these cases. I can almost see the sparkle of her eyes and hear her laugh as she would tell the adventures she met with in the management of refractory girls in her own home. She did not bring them back in disgrace, but kept working and praying, reproving and encouraging, month after month, and often year after year. I sometimes felt it was too wearing for her, and would say, 'Bring her back, Mrs. Mayo, and I will give you another girl.' 'I will not; I am going to save that girl,' was the reply she invariably gave me. Eternity alone will reveal the results of her work with the girls. I loved her, and cannot tell how much she was to me."

Mrs. Mayo knew, none better, that the wholesome atmosphere of a good country home was the tonic the degenerated minds and souls of her Industrial Home girls needed. She realized that they pined physically, as well as spiritually, for the pure air, the vigorous work, and the healthy interests that go with energetic country living; and that, more than all else, they

needed the sort of mothering they might have in many of these homes. Thus in this work, as in her fresh air work, Mrs. Mayo kept firm hold of the rural woman's hand. She sought to take her country sister with her on all her own excursions into the lives of those who lived beyond the bounds of farm fences. She was never diverted from the chiefest aim of her endeavors, the drawing out and developing of the rural home, but consistently acted on her belief in its possibilities.

### *Women's Sections of Farmers' Institutes*

Among the many agencies that have united to make for the betterment of rural community life, farmers' institutes have played a large part. They have been inspirational centers and have conducted vigorous, though brief, schools of instruction in progressive agriculture and rural sociology. Necessarily these have had to include topics relating to the home as well as to the work of the fields, for the two are inextricably knit together.

In 1895 the scope of the Michigan system of institutes was enlarged through a



greatly increased appropriation of funds. This enabled the superintendent of institutes, then Mr. K. L. Butterfield, to introduce some new features, among which was the provision for a separate woman's section at each county meeting. The idea appealed to him as not only feasible, but as one that would probably prove desirable and helpful among women. Before announcing the plan at all, he visited Mrs. Mayo, who had long been the confidante and counselor of those leaders in rural improvement projects who knew her. Mr. Butterfield laid his suggestions before her—this idea of getting women together and leading them to talk of those subjects most vital to them and their homes. Although a man proposed the plan, he well knew it needed a woman to inaugurate and mother it.

It is not hard to explain his reliance upon Mrs. Mayo for this new undertaking; neither is it difficult for those who have once come under the spell of her vivacity and manifested sympathy to understand the remarkable success it attained under her leadership. When asked how the project suggested by Mr. Butterfield appealed to

her, she said: "My heart just throbbed. It was what I had long wanted to do. He asked me what I would talk about. They were strong subjects that I suggested, and I remember we discussed the matter of how they would be received. Finally it was decided to try the plan." Looking back now over the history of the wonderful women's meetings, held in nearly every county in Michigan and in many other places, we feel it strange that she was so fearful of the undertaking. Under date of August 9, 1895, she wrote the superintendent of institutes as follows: "What the institutes are going to do, especially for us women folks, is the question that troubles me. There are hosts of topics that need bringing to the 'wimin.' While we gladly listen to papers upon the scientific feeding of farm stock, we want to know something about the scientific feeding of the human animal. We can understand something of the relative value of a silo and the best way to construct a barn; but we want also to know how best to build the home so that its influence upon each member of the family may be most helpful. The serious and grave questions

of life-saving and soul-saving are constantly thrust upon us; let us know something about life-giving—how to bear a well child and rear it well. If we only had a Mrs. Kedzie<sup>1</sup> and three or four of her brightest girls, with some such topics as these:

“‘Every-day cooking in the average farm kitchen; how to make it attractive to the eye and taste, and most nourishing to the body.’

“‘The farmer’s home, and how to make it happy.’

“‘The right and wrong punishment of children.’

“‘Heredity and maternity.’ (Dare you? This is a subject that should be presented. I can think of none more needed.)

“‘The farmers’ daughters—where shall they be educated?’

“‘Care of young children; healthful food and clothing for them.’

“‘How much of the profits of the farm should the wife receive during the life of her husband and how much at his death?’

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Nellie S. Kedzie (now Mrs. Howard M. Jones), at that time Dean of the Woman’s Department of Kansas Agricultural College.

“‘The farm home and all that it should represent.’

“Some of these are strong subjects, but the public needs them.”

After careful thought, Mrs. Mayo chose for the talks she was to give two subjects that represented the lines of social and practical life in the home which she felt should be emphasized in these experimental meetings for women. These topics were, “Mother and Daughter,” and “Making Farm Work Easier.” She spoke usually without notes, talking simply and directly out of her heart and experience to those who came to hear her. The results surprised the most sanguine. The meetings for women, under the leadership of a farm woman, proved unique and far-reaching. The same intense feeling was in them that accompanies any movement which touches vital emotions and unexpressed thoughts, and which requires courage and tact to inaugurate. Through them many women came to know themselves and to understand their responsibilities to their children as never before.

The first of the Women’s Sections was

held November 14, 1895. Afterward, when asked what convinced her of the value of the separate meetings for women, Mrs. Mayo instanced this first meeting. "I shall never forget it," she said. "They gave us a little reading room with a few chairs; I myself really questioned if any one would come. Twice we had to send out for more chairs. I stated the object of the meeting, all the time tremblingly watching my audience. The women listened quietly, and on a few of the older faces I saw tears. I talked for half an hour, when some school-girls came in; then I talked to them, kindly, tenderly, and sat down, feeling my attempt had been almost a failure. But a beautiful old lady, with large gold earrings and a gay blanket shawl, came up to me, put her arms around me tenderly, and, kissing me, said, 'If I could have had such a talk as that forty years ago I should have been a better mother.'"

Reports show that 5,309 women attended Mrs. Mayo's sections that first year, in twenty institutes, including the state meeting. In 1896-97 she attended forty-five institutes; in 1897-98, twenty-eight; 1898-

99, eighteen; and in 1899-1900, twelve. Each year she presided at the Women's Section of the state institute. All through her service she addressed the general institute sections, in addition to holding the separate meeting at each place. No account is made of such addresses in these figures; but it seems fair, however, to estimate that her audiences averaged two hundred a day, taking her work all through.

In closing these earnest, heart to heart talks with mothers, in those first days, Mrs. Mayo was wont to say: "Oh, mother, all things are yours—religion, science, philosophy, art, literature—all that is best of the best minds. It costs something to secure it, but it is worth the whole price. It costs of your time, your energy—your whole life's labor must be given to the work. It will not make much difference, years and years from now, whether you rode or walked, whether you wore a costly gown, made in the most approved style, or a cheap fabric that cost little money and less thought; whether your carpets were ingrain or Axminster, or, really, whether you had carpets at all; but it will make a vast differ-

ence what thoughts you thought, what associations were yours. The vigor of your mind and body, the aspiration of a strong motherhood that stirs your soul and that helps make your son a noble, useful man and your daughter a beautiful, true woman—these things *are* important.”

It was to be expected that the institutes would encounter hindrances. Every new enterprise, particularly of an educational character, is liable to suspicion and discredit at the outset by the very persons it most aims to help. The timid doubt its success and give faint-hearted assistance; mediocre and prejudiced minds pass upon it with biased judgment, and attempt to gauge it by material measures. One of the chief aims of the institutes was to allay such attitudes of mind. Mrs. Mayo's only reference to these early difficulties occurs in a report, where she exclaims, “It is very hard to dissuade people that somebody is not grinding an ax, and they are equally fearful that the first thing they know they will find they have been turning the grindstone.” She, in common with the men on the institute force, understood it was neces-

sarily a part of her duty to overcome, so far as possible, such suspicion as this, remove prejudices, and broaden farm folks' friendships beyond the confines of their own doorsteps. To accomplish this, methods must needs be tested and rejected if found not feasible; and thus it came about that an experimental series of Mrs. Mayo's extension lectures to women was abandoned for lack of funds. "I am sorry that the extension work must be given up," she writes. "Somehow, I can hardly have it so, for I know from what several women told me that it was just what they needed—especially young mothers. Why must matters of such vital importance, not only to the mothers of today, but to the children yet unborn, be made secondary to stock feeding and breeding, potato growing, and marketing and dairying? . . . I feel so small and so helpless when I see the needs of the people, and my soul cries out for wisdom, strength, and grace to help some of them along and up."

Of one of her topics she writes: "I should like, in 'Home Life on the Farm,' to speak very practically and very plainly; not that I mean to be offensive, but I want



the relations of husband and wife, parents and children, to stand for all that is sweet and true. I know they are pioneers, where I am to go, but I am sure I can reach them. Because of this pioneer life, of its struggles, anxieties, and cares, I want to tell them that these things should only bind them closer together. I do not mean to talk sentiment, but *God's truth*."

When planning the Women's Section programs for one of the annual state institutes, she asked that a talk be given by another of the women workers, on "The Relation of the Farmer's Wife to Society," adding by way of explanation of the request, "When I go about the state I find so many mothers with young children who fairly den up—they do no reading or thinking, they have no one to exchange an idea with or get an idea from save their husbands, and it may be just possible that their husbands have no ideas to spare—they may need all they have."

At the close of two seasons' experience with these gatherings of women, and after carefully observing their effects wherever he had opportunity, the superintendent

wrote to Mrs. Mayo: "Woman's work as we have known it under your charge the past winter is entirely unknown in other states, so far as I can discover. I find that the demand for the work is peremptory, and we must furnish a Women's Section for nearly every institute next winter." On her part, Mrs. Mayo realized what an innovation it meant to bring social topics of the nature she spoke upon into connection with farmers' institutes. She felt, too, the cavils of prejudice and misinterpretation upon her work searing her soul like a hot iron; but she stood and spoke the word as she believed it to be needed. The paucity of simple information and pure thought on these subjects made her feel the necessity for pressing them upon mothers and daughters. To a friend who was in closest sympathy with her efforts at this time she said: "The saddest thing I have had to meet is the fact, learned from some of our brightest mothers, that mothers do not know how to communicate what they really want to either to their young children or their grown-up or growing girls. Some lack knowledge, but more lack the ability to

teach in a proper, intelligent way what they do know. I have taken a great deal of pains to inquire about this, and the reply has always been the same, 'Teach mothers how to teach what they know.' In all the meetings I have held I have found but one woman who felt that children did not need to be taught about themselves; at least I have found but one who said so. I had a good long set-down talk with her. When I finished, she said, 'I think you are doing the right kind of work.'

"In the lists of books on these subjects I find only a few on *how* to teach children—how to plant good, beautiful, holy thoughts about themselves. What will do for a child will not do for girls from fourteen to twenty. This line of the work troubles me. More and more do I see the dire need—that is what perplexes. The revelations made by some of these mothers in the public meetings, things they have never named to any one before, would almost take your breath."

At another time she wrote: "When I see you I shall tell you of one woman I met at Sault Sainte Marie. It was all paid for

by just that one. I shall never forget her beautiful face and the intense earnestness of it, as she sat on the front seat with two children, one on each side of her, with their little heads in her lap, fast asleep. She had come *thirty miles*. At —, the young ladies from the high school came into my meeting. I think what I said was a revelation to them. I talked to them very plainly about young men and the kind of young people they should associate with. They listened beautifully. I also talked to them about being good to their mothers."

Mrs. Mayo's topics, added as the work grew, were: "The Well-bred Child," "Home Life on the Farm," "Poultry Raising for the Farmer's Wife," "How to Keep the Boys on the Farm," "Mother and the School," "The House We Live In," "The Unappreciated Side of Farm Life," "The Mother's Greatest Needs," "Wifehood and Motherhood," and "Mother and Children." The usefulness of the Women's Sections having been fully established through her experience with them, she was consulted as to the extension of the work, and asked to assist in selecting other women

speakers. With her keen discernment of character and clear understanding of the need, she set about the task of choosing women who would fit into the work, and the no less delicate undertaking of securing their consent to attempt it and of initiating them into their duties. Her native optimism regarding the powers and abilities of her friends shone out here. "Yes, you can; I know you can," she repeatedly said to the timid but really capable person, and by this confidence she helped many a woman to do what she could never have accomplished without such assurance. She was generous of herself, also, that those in whom she believed might succeed. At one time she wrote the institute management a note, which ran: "How glad I am Mrs. — is going to try the work. I know that she must have it as easy as possible, and if I can make it one whit easier for her by saying, 'Give me the hardest,' I will not only say it, but be glad to take it—such trips as to —, for instance, or any others where it needs strength and endurance. I am well and strong, and can stand it just as well as not; anything, so she may bear her message

to the people, for she has a wonderful message."

To Mrs. Mayo herself, however, was always accorded the sovereign place in the affections of the women who attended the institutes, and of her co-workers as well. "The other women helped us and we liked them, but we loved Mrs. Mayo;" this was the frank confession made to another woman who came later upon the farmers' institute force, by the women at the most remote point reached by the work. It chanced that Mrs. Mayo had often told us of this particular point, a spot seemingly almost inaccessible at the time of year institutes are held. She had said of it: "I rode thirty miles, straight into the pine plains and timber. The room for our meeting was a little cooped-up place and very dark. They had some boards for seats and a few chairs. The women had done their best by bringing a good many fancy articles, with bread, butter, and so forth, as exhibits. Our little room was *filled full*; I think there were forty present. One woman was to read a paper. She had come twelve miles with her four little children, one a baby.

When she was ready to read, she handed her baby to a woman beside her and read one of the most practical papers on 'A Mother's Needs' I ever heard; then she went back to her little ones, taking the baby again. I spoke on some point in her paper for a moment, trying to impress it on the audience, and shall never forget her reply. With all the beauty and dignity of motherhood, she stood there with her baby over her shoulder, patting it to keep it quiet, expressing her deep interest in the work and urging that it be continued."

It has come about that within the past few weeks I have been a guest in the home of the woman who was chairman of this remarkable meeting. Remarkable it was because it was held in a place so difficult of access—positively isolated in every way. Isolated it still is, so far as railroad facilities are concerned, but the farm homes in the region round about the village where this meeting was held are now strung on telephone lines, the Grange has several organizations on the oases in the jack pine plains, and the roads are growing better every year. I visited with the chairman of this first

Women's Section while she finished her morning's work, and shall repeat here what she told me, illustrating, as it does, the simple type and value of what Mrs. Mayo accomplished multifold times. This woman told me how actually shocked she had been to learn that she had been appointed chairman of the forthcoming Women's Section. She had not the faintest conception of what was expected of her. She simply felt certain she could not do it. When her husband came home she told him she must go at once to see the president of the institute. He hitched up a horse for her and she drove several miles, arriving a little before noon at the home of the president, who put her horse in the barn, in spite of her protests that she had come only upon business. When he came into the house, she told him her errand—she had come to resign as chairman of the Women's Section. He laughed and refused to listen; she remonstrated and insisted, but it was of no avail. The man finally quieted her fears somewhat by promising to assist her in every way, and so the matter was left.

"Soon after, I received a letter from



Mrs. Mayo," my informant in the kitchen continued, "and she explained that if I would arrange for some music and see that the room we were to occupy was a comfortable one, I would only need to call for the music and introduce her to the women. This looked easy enough, and I thought I would do the best I could. When the time came, Mrs. Mayo helped me, and every one was so interested and nice about it that I found it was not so impossible after all." She pointed out to me, too, the place where the woman lived who had read the paper at that first meeting of farm women among the pine plains of the far north—"the woman who had come twelve miles with her four little ones," and "stood with her baby over her shoulder, patting it to keep it quiet," while she told what a help the meeting was to her.

My friend told me, too, of her own memory of Mrs. Mayo, after all these years. "Some way," she said, "we felt she was one of us and knew all about us. Every one she met she left a friend." "I know," looked from the brown eyes, and "I understand," smiled from the face, ere her lips had

framed the words that went straight to their mark and convinced of sincerity and of experience as Mrs. Mayo took on herself the burden of them all. "Virtue literally seemed to go out from her, so that at the close of an address she would be weak and exhausted," said a co-worker. Indomitable in her faith in God and humanity, she shed confidence and stirred impulses to stronger endeavor for righteousness in others everywhere.

Even women, for there were such, who came with disapproval in their hearts for the separate Women's Section, almost invariably conceded its value and joined in its support. Mrs. Mayo appreciated such an attitude toward her work, and met it discreetly. An incident of this kind she was wont to tell of is repeated to me by one who recalls her love of a joke even at her own expense. "I must tell you a story," she said, "that is too good to keep. We were to have an institute at —, and the meeting was to be held in a two-story building, the ladies meeting upstairs. I arrived first and was sitting by a big stove that had a 'jacket' around it, and, through a register in the

floor, helped to warm the room above. It was a very cold day and also quite stormy, suggestive of a light attendance. After a short time a sleigh was driven to the door and some one helped out an old lady, who came in, unwinding the wrappings about her head as she entered. Seeing me, she said, 'Don't you think I am an old fool to come out such a day as this just to hear a woman speak?' 'Oh,' I said, 'I think you will enjoy it,' and began to help her take off her wraps. 'Well, I hope so, for John insisted on my coming, telling me that Mrs. Mayo says so many good things he wanted me to hear her talk; but I don't believe in women going around giving lectures and neglecting things in their own homes. I'll warrant if you should go to her home and look under her beds and around in the corners, you would think she might better be at home than going around telling other folks what to do.' Others began to arrive and go directly upstairs, and the old lady inquired if the meeting was not to be held where we were. I told her the other ladies were going to the room for the Women's Section, and that when she was warm we

would go upstairs, also. 'Well, I don't want you to set me up in front where I have got to look at her all the time. If I don't like what she says, I want to be where I can look out of the window.' I told her I would not put her in a front seat, but I was quite sure she would enjoy the meeting; then, thinking of something I wished to jot down, I took my pencil from my dress and, using the window sill for a desk, busied myself writing. In the meantime, the old lady had eyed me very closely and finally said, 'Who is this I have been talking to—not Mrs. Mayo?' Seeing me smile, she exclaimed, 'Oh, Lord! what have I done!' and begged me to forgive her, saying I must promise not to tell John or she would never hear the last of it. She also insisted upon going upstairs, where she took a front seat."

The occurrence, we may easily believe, created new inspiration in the speaker, and, at the close of the address, the dear old lady came to Mrs. Mayo and thanked her, telling her how glad she was that she had come and again begged pardon for her indiscreet criticism. "But," added Mrs. Mayo, "I made about as bad a blunder later in the

day, when quite a number of us were invited to tea by a former neighbor of the old lady. At the tea table I could not resist telling of her expressions, adding that I had promised not to tell her son John. Immediately one of the guests sprang to his feet, clapping his hands, and, to my dismay, I found he was 'son John' himself."

### *The Personal Touch*

A certain small Scotch woman, fine of fiber, set in the lone plain country and too much cumbered for her strength, who was a transformed woman from the hour she met Mrs. Mayo, said: "Her talk to the women of the farm was an inspiration. She seemed to reach the inmost soul, to know our needs. She was so sincere and earnest in every thing she said that our hearts went out to her, and we felt we had a friend." And then she continued, lovingly going over the memory, as if to herself: "There was something peculiar in the way I met Mrs. Mayo. She walked right into my heart the first time I ever saw and heard her. I was honored by having her call me 'friend.' Mrs. Mayo was very

unselfish. If she met people whom she thought had any talents at all, or could do any good whatever in the world, she had the faculty of bringing out whatever best there was in them."

The term "peculiar" has been used time and again by people in referring to their cordial friendship with this magnetic woman. She somehow found that which no one else had seemed to discover in those women whom some one has called "colorless." Having found something real in them, she made the most of it, often surprising no one else so much as the woman concerning whom she made the revelation. It was quite likely to be some aptness in the woman's boy or girl that she told of to a group of the woman's friends; or some ingenious contrivance this woman had in her housework, enlarged upon to the credit of the inventor. Mrs. Mayo thus revealed the woman to herself and to her family—which latter, occasionally, was more to the purpose. Nor was her influence confined to women. She was a constant help and inspiration to the men who heard and knew her. Said one: "I can never repay the debt

I owe her personally, for her words of encouragement, her acute intelligence, her ready sympathy, her belief in one's best side, were sources of strength to me for many years. Her faith in men and women, her love for them, her charity for their failings, her heroic and Christlike spirit during her last years, when sorrow and suffering came to her sensitive soul in a measure running over—all these are an inspiration to us all."

Said a young school man—another of "her boys"—the morning after her funeral, "My wife and I never went to her home but that when we came to go she did not bring us something—a chicken, a box of honey, or perhaps we would find a basket of apples, new potatoes, or other good things under the buggy seat when we reached home." Had he thought of it, he might have added a similar testimony as to the less tangible helps this friend had given him, for much does he prize the counsel and timely advice she gave him freely in the beginning of his career. Perhaps no one has crystallized in words the secret of this one farm woman's influence and the potency

of her life work so perfectly as she herself did in a few lines in one of the last personal messages that came from her pen: "I love everybody so much! I have wanted to help people to be kinder, truer, sweeter. And there is so much to do!"

### *System and Concentration*

But other women have loved and counseled and encouraged. True, and this one is pictured only because by her persistent activity and intelligent direction she was able to cast her impress so deeply on the lives of people who had been overlooked. She was consumed by a passion for humanity, but she was wise enough to try to help humanity from just where she herself stood. In every movement she put her hand to she sought to wrest from it a blessing for country people. For this reason, the Grange's open door, in her sight, was the Red Sea held back while farmers' wives went out from a service of bondage. It was not so much a bondage of hard work she rebelled against, as of solitude and mental inactivity. She sought to put new incentives into the necessary responsibilities and duties that



come to every farmer and his family. Because of her alert, trained mind and magnetic ability to organize and inspire unassuming, hesitating persons, she was able to achieve much where others would have failed.

In the broadening of the home life about her into the wide, homelike neighborhood circle, there must of necessity have been a warm, rich love note answering to the clear, discreet call of man's more reasoning sense. Here Mrs. Mayo found vent for the forces that surged through her. She early overcame the desire to yield to passing moods, to shirk, or to magnify physical ailments. She learned true values. She had no time for melancholy. She breathed the ozone of all breezes that freshened her mental and moral atmosphere. She sought to feel the throb of activity everywhere, in science, mechanics, art, drama, music, and workaday things. She rejoiced to meet great-brained men and large-hearted women whose views towered above the limited horizon of ordinary people. Practical usefulness was a cogent incentive with her to subordinate self and open avenues to larger

sympathies and closer relations with others. What she was, from all this, she must, perforce, give out in unstinted measure to her great farm sisterhood.

Her earlier interest and addresses were marked by aspirations and admonitions for a quickened mental life, strong and contagious in enthusiasm; her later, by a noticeable deepening of the affectional life, as shown by her constant counseling for gentleness of speech, purity of life, and charity of judgment, crowned by her unflinching sweetness in devotion to the uttermost duty as it was revealed to her.

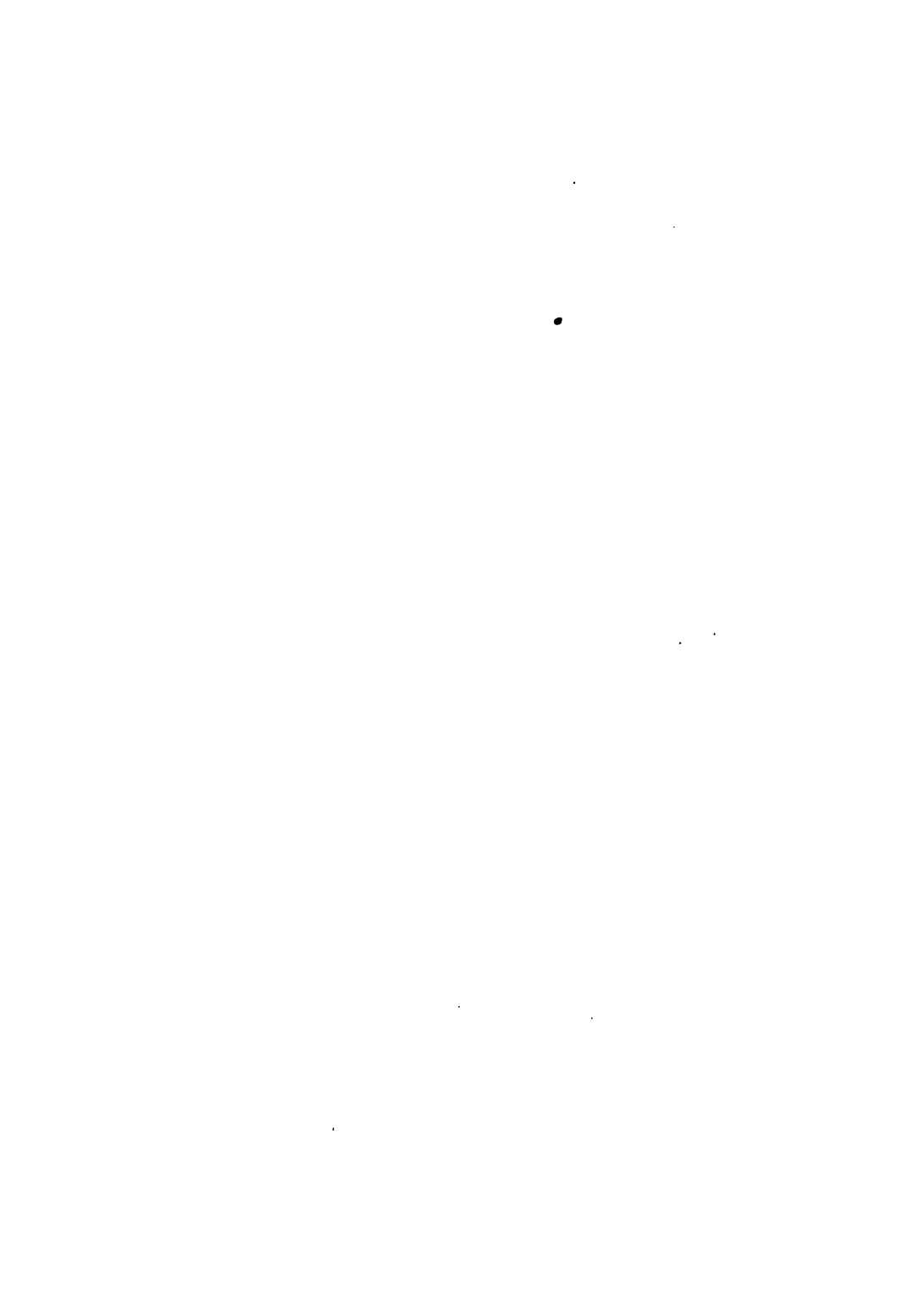
### *Behind the Curtain*

In the midst of the ever widening circle of her deepening power, and the seeming urgent need for it in her own and other states, she was summoned to a more interior service. Her only daughter, the delight, pride, and fairly the lifeblood of the mother, was stricken with an illness, agonizing in pain and baffling the skill of medicine and surgery. For five years the smitten mother's face was set full to the blast, yet without faltering. "Because *I know my*

*Pilot*," she said, "it will be all right, sometime, somewhere."

Bravely, with an indomitable courage native to so noble a nature as hers, she stood day and night at the post of her nearest duty. For more than a year, without a sign to others, she fought the inroads upon herself of an incurable disease, giving up her place at her daughter's bedside only three weeks before the transition came to her own dauntless spirit, April 21, 1903.

Through all her life ran a recognition that death is but an incident in life, that one's work is not bounded by time, but that what is begun here is continued There. How beautifully such confidence in the oneness of life reconciles the otherwise irreconcilable! Thus lived for and thus has gone before the farm women of every section one who was affectionately known as "Mother Mayo." Not by her many years was the title won, but by the shedding abroad of a sympathetic, dignified womanliness that constantly suggested the highest type of motherhood.





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